

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Rockline Industries

Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions

Rockline Industries Wipes Out Inefficiency With Lean Training

Client Profile:

Rockline Industries, Inc. is a manufacturer of branded and private label consumer wet wipe products. Located in Springdale, Arkansas, the company employs less than 500 people.

Situation:

Rockline Industries learned about lean manufacturing concepts while attending an open-enrollment Lean 101 course hosted by the Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network (the Network), a NIST MEP network affiliate, at a local community college. Rockline's engineers believed lean manufacturing would benefit the company by helping employees identify ways to improve workflow and eliminate wastes. Following the course, Rockline Industries decided to bring the Network into the plant to conduct on-site lean training for all its employees.

Solution:

The Network met with Rockline's training manager, Marion Cowan, to formulate a training plan, and engaged a local community college and training consortium to jointly organize the many training sessions. The community college obtained financial assistance on behalf of Rockline Industries from the Arkansas Department of Economic Development's Existing Workforce Training Program. This grant made training for Rockline's many employees affordable.

The Network conducted classroom presentations and hands-on simulations of basic lean manufacturing principles during the Lean 101 course sessions. It also trained key Rockline employees in more advanced lean techniques such as setup reduction, total productive maintenance (TPM), value stream mapping, and 5S. Following Lean 101 training, the Network--with assistance from newly trained Rockline staff-- conducted an assessment of Rockline's work areas to identify opportunities for lean principles to be applied. Many lean principles have been applied to the company's production floor, including 5S, SMED, and TPM. Since then, the company has experienced a significant reduction in waste, increased its productivity, and improved the use of its space to become cleaner and more efficient.

Results:

Invested \$12,000, 920 worker hours, and 1800 training hours to implement lean

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principles.

Reduced waste.

Increased productivity and efficiency.

Expanded employee knowledge-base outside of functional areas.

Improved employee morale.

Improved utilization of space to create a cleaner, more organized facility.

Testimonial:

"I believe that the (Network) presentation encourages learning in a fun environment, and the students not only learn the concepts of lean manufacturing but also experience some of the team building techniques needed to implement these concepts in a team environment."

Marion C. Cowan, Training Manager